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SUBJECT: SUDAN/DARFUR: SPECIAL ENVOY WILLIAMSON'S APRIL 14
CONSULTATIONS IN PARIS

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Classified By: DCM Mark Pekala, 1.4 (b/d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In meetings with Foreign Minister Kouchner and other GOF officials during April 14 consultations in Paris, Sudan Special Envoy Richard Williamson stressed the need to accelerate deployment of UNAMID and to exploit the possibility that the Khartoum regime might be willing to seek a political solution to the Darfur impasse. The French were generally in a listening mode, taking keen interest in the USG's desire to create momentum in the short term and expressing their support for this effort. They all supported a speedier deployment by UNAMID and said France would do what it could in that area, including using its influence with the UN's new DPKO chief, likely to be a French replacement for the incumbent. They agreed that the controversy over Tibet and the Olympic Games could lead to a more flexible PRC posture regarding Darfur. Kouchner identified Sudan President Bashir as the key obstacle to progress, calling him a "liar" at several points. Kouchner's crisis and conflict advisor Eric Chevallier agreed with the need to build momentum but thought that Abdulwahid el-Nur should be accorded more time in order build his strength and enable him to play a more productive role. MFA A/S-equivalent Jean de Glinasty believed that working with Khalil Ibrahim and JEM was essential to finding a solution and supported the Dakar Contact Group's efforts to revive patrolling along the Sudan-Chad frontier. Presidential Deputy Diplomatic Advisor Bruno Joubert agreed on the need to accelerate UNAMID's deployment, restart political dialogue, and engage with Khartoum, which he thought the U.S. could do better than France. He also noted the opaque nature of intra-Sudanese politics and the difficulty of understanding the motivations of the different players. All of the French acknowledged the complexity of the series of problems radiating from Darfur, including especially Chad's problems, and the difficulty in finding the path to a solution. They nonetheless stated their intention to work with SE Williamson and U.S. initiatives on behalf of Sudan and Darfur. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Sudan Special Envoy Richard Williamson met with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in Paris on April 14, following extensive meetings with Bruno Joubert (Deputy Diplomatic Advisor to President Sarkozy), MFA AF A/S-equivalent Jean de Glinasty and DAS-equivalent Helene Le

Gal, and Eric Chevallier (Kouchner's advisor for crisis and conflict management and humanitarian assistance). Ambassador Stapleton attended the meeting with Joubert and PolMinCouns attended the meeting with Gliniasty and Le Gal. USUN Jana Chapman Gates and Embassy acting AF-watcher attended all of the meetings. Septels report SE Williamson's separate meetings with Abdulwahid el-Nur and with a JEM delegation (April 15).

U.S. Position

13. (C) In each of his meetings with the French, SE Williamson opened by noting the importance of accelerating UNAMID's deployment and increasing the number of troops on the ground. He understood UN DPKO's reticence to move faster but he nonetheless hoped that DPKO could do so, despite the absence of the political settlement that DPKO would prefer and the fact conditions were less than optimal. The expected change in DPKO's leadership could inject new momentum into the process. He cited as an example of the UN's tardiness the fact that only 15% of UNAMID's USD 1.28 billion dollar budget had been spent even though 75% of its budget cycle had passed. While the Chinese engineers had begun to deploy, no new camps or facilities had been constructed to add to the U.S.-sponsored camps built for AMIS now under UNAMID's control. Moreover, several countries had made troop contribution offers but were told that UNAMID was unable to absorb more troops at present, which was regrettable.

14. (C) SE Williamson described his recent discussion of Sudan with President Bush and the latter's commitment to making progress on an expedited basis. SE Williamson had also corresponded with UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon, stressing the urgent need to speed deployment. SE Williamson described other ways of quickening deployment, including the use of contractors to overcome the inability of some African

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contributors to field self-sustaining units. If some current obstacles were reduced, he believed that 9,000 additional troops (7,400 Africans and 1,600 from Nepal and Thailand) could be deployed by the end of 2008, doubling UNAMID's deployed force and leading to improved conditions in Darfur. The limited but focused patrols UNAMID was already conducting were making a difference.

15. (C) SE Williamson requested that the French use their influence to encourage DPKO to deploy more rapidly, particularly if a French replacement became DPKO chief. He repeatedly lauded the French for their foresight in including Chad as part of the larger regional problem; their response to the February fighting in Chad; their leadership in creating and deploying EUFOR in Chad and C.A.R.; their role in the Friends of UNAMID group at the UN; and their mentoring relationship with Senegal regarding its engagement in Sudan. He stressed the need for the U.S. and France to work together on Sudan.

16. (C) On other diplomatic fronts, SE Williamson expressed the importance of identifying a single negotiator who might replace Jan Eliasson and Salim Salim, who, while well intentioned, had not been effective. It might also be useful to form a small contact group of key players, which would include France, to provide additional impetus, as had been done earlier regarding certain IGAD issues. SW Williamson noted the possibility of increased Chinese flexibility on Darfur because of China's preoccupation with Tibet and the Olympic Games and its desire to avoid making Darfur another target for China's critics. The pre-Olympic period could thus be a useful time to make advances in the UNSC.

17. (C) Although noting that the UN's performance could be better, SE Williamson made clear that the bulk of the problem rested with the Khartoum regime, which continued to impede progress with the UN and with political dialogue. He sensed, however, that the Sudanese might be more open to compromise,

in part because of two factors. The first was the willingness of the U.S. to improve relations with erstwhile foes, such as Libya, when they changed behavior and started acting more responsibly. This example could move Sudan in the right direction. Second, the Sudanese were increasingly aware that President Bush's successor could present new and different challenges to the Khartoum regime, and that it might be better to make progress during President Bush's tenure rather than gamble on an unknown future. For these reasons, SE Williamson was meeting in Paris with Abdulwahid el-Nur and a JEM delegation, and would then meet in Rome with Bashir's advisor Nafi ali Nafi. Following overtures at the AU Summit, Deng Alor had already visited Washington, itself an indication of a Sudanese willingness to engage, with Secretary Rice reminding him that the U.S. position could

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change in response to improved Sudanese behavior. The U.S. and Sudan had exchanged papers on possible ways forward, another encouraging sign, although the initial Sudanese response was less than it could have been.

Meeting with Foreign Minister Kouchner

18. (C) After welcoming SE Williamson and offering his encouragement, Foreign Minister Kouchner noted that EUFOR's deployment in Chad and C.A.R. was going well, although dealing with Chad President Deby was a challenge. Kouchner said that the rebel attack in February was well timed to take place as EUFOR was beginning to deploy. SE Williamson outlined USG priorities and his talks with Sudan President Bashir, who displayed some openness to progress with the UN and UNAMID and to agreeing to Nepalese and Thai participation. Kouchner expressed skepticism about Bashir, considering him to be the key problem. Kouchner noted Bashir's long tenure in office, his tendency to lie, and the difficulty in believing and working with him. However, he probably appreciated the direct approach the USG was making. SE Williamson said that Sudan was likely to explore what it could achieve during the remainder of the current U.S. administration. Hence the need to exploit the short window by moving faster.

19. (C) Unfortunately, Kouchner noted, the killing was still taking place, with Bashir's approval. He referred to Bashir directly as "a liar." Kouchner remarked on continuing

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North-South problems and the possibility of Sudan's division following the 2011 referendum. Darfur remained the key to many of these issues. SE Williamson was more optimistic about the North-South CPA. There seemed to be movement on the internal political front in the South, although moving troops into the border area raised the possibility of danger. He noted the possibility that there could be agreement on dividing Abyei's oil wealth, with each new map moving closer to original demarcation lines, with two separate oil fields, making it convenient for both North and South to possess an oil field.

110. (C) Kouchner agreed on the need to "keep pushing," as the French had in Chad. He noted the parallels between Chad and Sudan, but again cited Bashir as the main obstacle. He said that he and President Sarkozy remained engaged on Sudan. He agreed that 18,000 troops on the ground in Darfur by the end of 2008 would make a difference. The meeting concluded with Kouchner's encouragement for SE Williamson's efforts and his commitment to France's remaining engaged.

Meeting with Eric Chevallier (Kouchner Advisor)

111. (C) SE Williamson met with Eric Chevallier, Kouchner's advisor on crisis and conflict management and humanitarian assistance, just prior to the meeting with Kouchner. After summarizing key USG objectives (paras 3-7, above), SE Williamson described his meeting earlier that day with

Abdulwahid el-Nur (septel) and the meetings he planned with JEM and with Nafi in Rome, commenting that Abdulwahid remained fixed on obtaining "security" before he would engage. The problem was that his insistence on "security" (which Abdulwahid construed in the most absolute terms) allowed him to avoid acting. On the other hand, the Khartoum regime was making overtures to the U.S. that created certain possibilities. The U.S. had advised the Sudanese to seize their opportunities. SE Williamson noted that if Bashir stalled for the rest of the year, it might take up to two years to regain momentum, considering the need for a new U.S. administration to take office, construct a policy, and then implement it. SE Williamson reiterated his concerns about Eliasson and Salim Salim and the need for a small group (including France) to focus on Sudan. We had to achieve as much as possible by the end of July.

¶12. (C) SE Williamson noted the important role of Khalil Ibrahim and JEM, and the difficulty of obtaining their cooperation. Expressing appreciation for French efforts in Chad, SE Williamson said that the USG had approached Chad President Deby about his support for JEM. Unfortunately, such was the level of violence over long periods in the region, it appeared to some Chadians and Sudanese that what passed for an intolerable situation for the rest of the world was for them a state of relative peace. It was difficult to gain momentum in the face of that mind-set.

¶13. (C) Responding to SE Williamson's points, Chevallier said that the U.S. timetable (elections, change in administration) was important and increased the need to accelerate efforts. He assured that the likely new French chief of UN DPKO would be helpful. He agreed with SE Williamson's point that criticism should not be directed at the current DPKO chief personally, who was faced with a difficult challenge and had to operate within UN parameters. The new DPKO leadership would, he hoped, strive for new impetus. He agreed that 75% of the problem rested with Sudan, and advised "pushing the UN and not bashing it," with which SE Williamson expressed agreement. Despite France's bilateral problems with Rwanda, which both sides were trying to improve, Chevallier said that Rwanda was committed to help in Sudan.

¶14. (C) Chevallier said that the GOF had been talking with Abdulwahid. While his position was not totally "locked," he was nonetheless "not where we want him to be." Chevallier noted Abdulwahid's presence at the recent meeting in Geneva (for which SE Williamson expressed his appreciation to the French) but he still seemed to think there was no urgency to negotiate. Chevallier advised giving Abdulwahid more time. Abdulwahid's sense of momentum was not the same as ours and he needed to manage SLM issues in his own way. Chevallier said that the French would continue to work with Abdulwahid

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and would keep the U.S. informed. SE Williamson said that he had advised Abdulwahid to rethink his constant refrain on the need for "security," which did little to advance the process.

Chevallier agreed that Abdulwahid could not simply repeat the need for "security" at every turn. He needed to be more precise and reasonable. That said, Chevallier observed that one had no choice but to try to strengthen Abdulwahid's position and to maintain SLM cohesion. SE Williamson agreed, and observed that with JEM, its military posture was paramount; with Abdulwahid, the concerns were on the political side. Chevallier said that Abdulwahid was not ready to talk to Khalil Ibrahim and needed to be stronger politically.

¶15. (C) On China, Chevallier said that President Sarkozy's nuanced and uncommitted stance on attending the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games was good. In that context, the recent statement by a senior USG official critical of other leaders' threats to boycott the opening ceremony was, in Chevallier's view, shortsighted. He agreed that the Games

provided an opportunity concerning China and Darfur. He said the French would try to raise the French public's consciousness on Darfur. In France, almost all attention was focused on Tibet. It would be helpful to develop awareness of China and Darfur, as a means of influencing Chinese behavior there. At the same time, Chevallier said that one could not "declare war on China." (NOTE: The French press is reporting a growth in anti-French sentiment in China as a result of the trouble-plagued Olympic-flame incident in Paris. END NOTE.)

¶16. (C) Chevallier discussed the UK's interest in Darfur, with Mark Malloch-Brown as his main recent interlocutor. Malloch-Brown seemed to favor a UNSC initiative that would bring the players together for discussions. SE Williamson reserved judgment on Malloch-Brown's idea and would see how it developed, stating that in the past, his proposals were often based on the premise that he could move the USG to compromise. SE Williamson reiterated the need for an IGAD-type arrangement that would include France and the U.S. He also stated his preference for a single negotiator to replace Eliasson and Salim Salim. Chevallier said that the French had just met with AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, who displayed a helpful attitude on a number of AU-related issues. Chevallier said Ping was easy to deal with, and indicated that Ping thought that a Sudan negotiator to replace Eliasson and Salim Salim did not have to be African.

¶17. (SBU) The meeting with Chevallier concluded with his escorting SE Williamson to Kouchner's office, with the Foreign Minister agreeing on the spot to meet with him.

Meeting with MFA AF Bureau

¶18. (C) Before meeting with Kouchner and Chevallier, SE Williamson met with MFA A/S-equivalent Jean de Gliniasty and DAS-equivalent Helene Le Gal. PolMinCouns also attended. Gliniasty provided an overview, stating that Chad was part of the Darfur problem and that the French, via EUFOR and Deby's survival, had succeeded in Chad. The situation remained tenuous, however, with UNAMID slow to deploy and political dialogue deadlocked. Abdulwahid remained in Paris, Khalil Ibrahim was still seeking victory in Sudan, and Bashir continued to support Chad's rebels. There were elements that could form a global solution but deadlock prevailed.

¶19. (C) Gliniasty said that France at first had put little stock in the Dakar Agreement on Chad-Sudan but he attended the first Chad-Sudan Contact Group meeting in Libreville April 10 (reftel) and found some positive indications, notably the possibility of re-establishing 10 border monitoring stations. He said there would be a follow-up Contact Group meeting in Tripoli in two weeks. He said that France very much hoped that there would no further combat in Chad before the onset of the rainy season and that the Contact Group's work would also forestall a resumption in violence. He also mentioned a possible UK-sponsored conference in London. SE Williamson said that the U.S. had not yet decided on the conference; Gliniasty said that neither JEM nor Abdulwahid had agreed to attend either. Gliniasty said that JEM was no longer in Darfur, which meant there could be renewed fighting if JEM sought to reestablish

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itself there. Gliniasty believed there was now an opportunity to negotiate.

¶20. (C) In Gliniasty's view, JEM was the most problematic issue. JEM was composed of the Zaghawa and wanted to take power in Khartoum, with all-out war an option. Deby supported JEM and used it for his own protection. JEM represented a direct threat to Bashir. Gliniasty believed that if "the JEM problem" could be resolved, 75% of the region's problems would also be solved.

¶21. (C) SE Williamson reviewed USG perspectives on the

region (paras 3-7 above). He concluded by discussing his exchanges with Khartoum, Abdulwahid, and JEM. Gliniasty cited the importance of a cease-fire, which he described as "the bridge" between UNAMID and the political process. He said that Sudan indicated it was ready for a cease-fire but would react if attacked. Monitoring a cease-fire would be important, with UNAMID perhaps serving in that role. A cease-fire nonetheless would be problematic if both sides continued to arm their rebel allies. Gliniasty, clearly interested in a cease-fire, discussed the possibility of using drone aircraft to monitor. But "political monitoring" would have to take place as well. He reiterated that the border monitoring scheme that emerged from the Libreville talks was an opportunity. He said that Abdulwahid's insistence on "ensured security" could perhaps be met if an effective and monitored cease-fire could be established. SE Williamson noted Abdulwahid's insistence on "security" but observed that a cease-fire might be difficult to establish given present circumstances and the need to obtain the accord of many parties that would have to agree to one and whose objectives diverged. He commented that Abdulwahid wanted to be king of Darfur whereas Khalil Ibrahim wanted to be king of Sudan.

¶21. (C) Gliniasty said that it was possible that JEM was the easier party, with indications that a channel existed between Khalil Ibrahim and Khartoum. If JEM were removed from the equation, the rebel side might be left with only 500 fighters. Abdulwahid controlled much of the refugee camps but was weak militarily. If JEM cooperated with a large UNAMID presence, the situation would improve significantly.

¶22. (C) Gliniasty agreed with SE Williamson that a single negotiator should replace Eliasson and Salim Salim, although he did not have an individual in mind. Gliniasty conceded UN shortcomings but said the UN was far less at fault than the Sudanese. He noted recalcitrance within the EU and the need to hire Russian helicopters for EUFOR in Chad and C.A.R. Gliniasty said that the French had pressured UN DPKO over establishing UNAMID as an entity so that it would be in existence within the same timeframe that France was pushing the EU to agree to EUFOR. DPKO resisted but did so "honestly," Gliniasty said.

¶23. (C) On Abdulwahid, Gliniasty said there was some pressure within the GOF to expel him for his lack of cooperation but the breakdown in the political dialogue meant there was no longer a reason to do so. France would continue to try to "manage and push him." Abdulwahid suffered from an inflated ego. SE Williamson remarked that he had few fighters but enjoyed the loyalty of the Fur, and was able to say what the Fur and other refugees were feeling. Unfortunately, Gliniasty said, part of his popular support was based on his ability to say "no;" if there were progress politically, he could lose credibility. UNAMID's success or a successful political dialogue could cost him.

¶24. (C) DAS-equivalent Le Gal asked whether the U.S. had talked to Deby. SE Williamson said that the U.S. had done so and would continue to do so, in coordination with France. He reiterated the need for an IGAD-like group, which would include France largely because of the Chad dimension. Gliniasty said increased involvement by the international community (e.g., the P-5 and others) in the Dakar Contact Group could be helpful as current members might not be able to exploit opportunities the Contact Group provided. A "Friends of the Dakar Agreement" group could be formed, which could at least act as a consultative body that could also "name and shame" when necessary. At the Contact Group meeting in Libreville, France refused Sudan's suggestion that

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French troops (not in the EUFOR context) help patrol the border. Gliniasty hoped that the Contact Group meeting in Tripoli could mark an advancement, perhaps by getting Chad and Sudan to agree to steps they had accepted in previous

peace accords.

¶25. (C) Discussion turned to the CPA and North-South issues and the possibility of Sudan becoming two countries. The key would be the extent to which the two sides could agree to an amicable separation and resolution of the oil issue. Gliniasty said that the preferred outcome would be a unified Sudan. He hoped that the 2009 vote would see SPLM officials elected in the North and NCP officials in the South. This was not likely, however, and the South's secession would not be welcomed in the region, where other countries suffered from similar divisions. SE Williamson agreed that the 2009 and 2011 votes presented challenges and potentially difficult outcomes. Gliniasty said that it would be better to have an agreement in place between North and South so that both sides together would be prepared to manage the outcome of the vote.

¶26. (C) On the oil resources, SE Williamson said that there was a fairly even distribution (55-45) already in place, which was a good sign. He noted that the two sides were coming closer on demarcation issues, with the possibility that both would end up with a fair chunk of Sudan's oil.

Meeting with Bruno Joubert (French Presidency)

¶27. (C) Accompanied by Ambassador Stapleton, SE Williamson also met with Bruno Joubert, Deputy Diplomatic Advisor (and Senior Africa Advisor) to President Sarkozy. After SE Williamson reviewed U.S. policy (paras 3-7, above), Joubert commented on the complexity of the situation, with "obstacles everywhere," but he agreed on the need to make progress with UNAMID's deployment; UNAMID needed to be a "serious force." He encouraged SE Williamson's pragmatic approach. He acknowledged the UN's reluctance to add UNAMID to the existing UNMIS operation. But, the decision having been made, the UN had to move forward. He shared SE Williamson's hope that new leadership at DPKO provided an opportunity.

¶28. (C) Joubert that the political question was at the core of the problem and stressed the need to restart it. He noted the ineffectiveness of Eliasson and Salim Salim and referred also to the "black box" of intra-Sudanese politics. He said that he had met recently in Khartoum with Sudan intelligence chief Salah Gosh, whom Joubert descried as a "big bad guy." Was it possible to isolate him? Joubert said that Gosh surprised him by advising against isolating Khalil Ibrahim, saying even that "we need him," which Joubert found inexplicable. Instead, Gosh directed his hostility towards Abdulwahid. Gosh's statements caused Joubert to reflect on the "black box" and what could not be perceived by outsiders. Joubert said there might be some merit in the UK's idea of circumventing the minor groups to deal with JEM and Abdulwahid, to see if there were any common ground between them, which could then be taken to Khartoum in an attempt to broker a deal.

¶29. (C) Joubert said that the start of the rainy season would provide time, assuming there would be no fighting before then. This would provide another four to six months. JEM would always be preparing to attack again and Sudan would be ready to launch the Chadian rebels. The rains would at least postpone this. Our objectives in the meantime would be clear: 1) deploy UNAMID, the faster the better; 2) restart political dialogue; and 3) engage Khartoum. On the last point, Joubert said that only the U.S. could do this. France had nothing to offer, except perhaps the specter of ICC prosecutions, which the Sudanese despised. The possibility of a Bashir visit to Paris also existed but it would not come "for free." SE Williamson remarked that the U.S. political calendar, with a new president soon to take office, could also prompt movement on the Sudanese side. Sudan could shut down and wait. Now was the time for additional effort, while Khartoum remained relatively open to suggestion. China and its problems with Tibet over the Olympic Games also afforded an opportunity. SE Williamson said that for all of these reasons, it was a good moment to press forward on Sudan. Joubert agreed there would be a loss of leverage after the Beijing Games.

¶30. (C) In response to Joubert's query on the CPA and its effect on the overall picture, SE Williamson said that he had been less worried than observers about the unraveling of the CPA in the fall of 2007, despite the deployment of troops along the North-South border. He referred to the 55-45 distribution of oil revenues and movement to accept a demarcation line that offered oil resources to both sides. The South had done well in surviving the death of John Garang and his less capable successors, such as Salva Kiir, had managed to do a fairly good job in holding things together. SE Williamson acknowledged the possibility of a single rash act setting off a conflict but he said the CPA was still intact and making slow progress. The 2009 and 2011 votes represented different challenges, however. He hoped that the 2009 vote, which was largely a U.S. initiative, would not prove to be a deal-breaker, with the 2011 referendum looming as the real issue. SE Williamson stressed the need to keep the CPA going; its breakdown would be a disaster for Darfur. The South was not ready to become an independent entity, with hardly any infrastructure or economic strength.

¶31. (C) Joubert said that Sudan has been on the French agenda for a long time but that France lacked leverage. President Sarkozy has been disappointed that the energy he brought to Sudan by hosting the June 2007 ministerial conference was dissipating. On the other hand, France's efforts in Chad and with EUFOR had, so far, been successful. SE Williamson suggested a group format based on the IGAD formula, with France playing a key role and the U.S. supplying some of the leverage France lacked. Joubert noted the UK's helpful interest and the EU as a "proxy player." Joubert said that "we know where we want to go, but the tactics for arriving there are missing."

¶32. (C) Joubert wondered about Abdulwahid's real objectives and what he had to offer. SE Williamson said that Abdulwahid feared being marginalized as Minni Minawi had been. Joubert said that this was an area where Eliasson could have been more effective in sketching out common ground among the rebels.

¶33. (C) In conclusion, Joubert offered his encouragement and noted France's EU presidency during the second half of ¶2008. He said that France would not likely suggest any new initiatives on Darfur during that period but that it would do what it could to encourage broader EU engagement.

¶34. (U) SE Williamson has cleared this message.

¶35. (U) Minimize considered.

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